

February 12, 1985

To people living and working in San Francisco:

Today, inside the St. Francis Hotel from 3 - 6 pm, the South African Tourism Board, South African Airways and others are sponsoring a "party" for local travel agents to promote vacations in South Africa.

The Bay Area Free South Africa Movement and San Franciscans Against Apartheid are picketing this event because of what this party is NOT showing the travel agents. South Africa is a beautiful land, but it is a tortured one because of the apartheid system which controls everyone's lives, tourists included.

As you may know, South Africa is governed by a political and economic system called apartheid. It was designed so that the black majority must live in poverty while the white population enjoys one of the highest standards of living in the world. Under apartheid 75% of the people of South Africa--those classified as African--have no political or civil rights. They cannot even vote. It is illegal to protest the government's racial laws; those who do are subject to imprisonment and--if not killed--can be held for years without trial.

Surely this lack of basic rights violates every principle for which our country stands. Promoting tourism only serves to support the South African government and help assure that it will not be pressured to make substantial efforts to dismantle apartheid.

People living in the Bay Area have a long history of opposing this apartheid system and U.S. involvement in its continuation. Just last November, 62% of San Francisco's voters made a strong statement by approving Proposition J which directed the city to no longer invest its pension funds in companies doing business in South Africa. Which makes this promotional event by the South African government all the more appalling.

Furthermore, the South African Tourism Board had the arrogance to schedule this party in February, Black History Month, and on Abraham Lincoln's birthday, the President who signed the Emancipation Proclamation ending slavery in the U.S.!

We are asking you to express your disgust and outrage over such a "party". Let the St. Francis Hotel management, your Supervisor, and Mayor Feinstein know that these promotional activities are totally inappropriate for San Francisco. It's important that they know they will be held accountable for throwing a party to promote the "racists of the world."

And of course, please join us in this picket!

For more information on what people here are doing to support the South African struggle for freedom, contact us at the following addresses. In the meantime, join with people across the country who are wearing red ribbons to commemorate the blood being shed by South Africans and as a sign that you are willing to help stop apartheid.

Sincerely,

Bay Area Free South Africa Movement  
445 Bellevue  
Oakland, CA 94610  
752-7766/469-1005

San Franciscans Against Apartheid  
c/o Bethel AME Church, 970 Laguna  
San Francisco, CA 94115  
921-4935

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